

Central North Island Climbing Walls

Hamilton

Extreme Edge
90 Greenwood Street SH1
Frankton Ph 07 847 5858
Monday evenings is NZAC
member discounted night
\$8 with own gear \$11 with
gear hire. Or 10% off any
other day.

Otorohanga

Harvest Rock
5 Tuhoro Street Otorohanga
Ph 07 873 8893 \$8 to NZAC
members

Mt Maunganui

The Rock House
9 Triton Avenue Mt
Maunganui Ph 07 572 4920
www.therockhouse.co.nz \$2
off admission fee.

Rotorua

The Wall
1140 Hinemoa Street Ph 07
350 1400
www.thewall.co.nz \$2 off
admission fee.

Taupo

The Edge
Taupo Events Centre Cnr
Upper Spa and AC Baths
Avenue Ph 07 376 0350
\$10 Adults with gear

Turangi

Vertical Assault
26 Ngawaka Place Turangi
Ph 07 386 6558
www.extremebackpackers.co.nz
20% discount for
NZAC members on
presentation of membership
cards

National Park

National Park Backpackers
Finlay Street National Park
Village Ph 07 892 2870
www.nppb.co.nz \$10 entry
with own gear, additional
discounts for groups.

CNI Section Notices

Annual Climbing Camp

Climbing Camp registration

Climbing Camp will be at Aoraki Mt Cook this year, based at Unwin Lodge. Registration is open and places in the Lodge is filling quickly. For information and a registration form go to:

<http://alpineclub.org.nz/event/annual-climbing-camp-2012>

NZ Rock Festival - Whanganui Bay

Bolting Course

21/22 January 2012

[click here](#) for info and registration

Banff Mountain Film Festival- organisers sought!

In 2011 the NZAC held eleven screening of the Banff Mountain Film Festival- more than in any other year.

In 2012 there will be a screening in Queenstown- Chris Byrch has put up her hand to organise this and would appreciate another Club Member to help her.

The Club would also like to screen the Festival in Palmerston North and Napier and seeks Club Volunteers who would be willing to work with the Event and Activities Co-ordinator to make this happen.

This is a fun job and you get to see all the films early! Fifty percent of the surplus \$\$ from each screening goes to National Office; the other fifty percent stays with the local section. Maybe your section wants to hold a Rock Climbing course for local youth? Or an Avalanche Awareness Course? Or have a Christmas Party? This would be a way of raising the money.

All those interested in being involved in making the Banff Mountain Festival happen in Palmerston North, Napier or Queenstown contact: pat@alpineclub.org.nz

NZAC General Manager Wanted

Do you want the top job in the NZ Alpine Club? For information on the role and to apply, [click here](#)

Punching Through Pays Double Dividends

by Elliot O'Brien



CNI section members battled fickle late spring weather for some fantastic summits on Ruapehu and Taranaki. A theme emerged: rain and low visibility making for some tough calls, then a wet slog for first few hours rewarded with clear still conditions above the cloud and beautiful 360 degree views.

Taranaki

In the last week of October fine weather was forecast for Taranaki, despite miserable conditions predicted for Tongariro National Park. This attracted the attention of Phil Nicholson, Steve Gottschling and Elliott O'Brien. Cognizant that this could be the last fine forecast for the mountain while it still had

good snow, and that it could provide excellent training for Phil and Steve's upcoming South Island mission, a plan was hatched for Sunday 30 October. Marcus Bai also decided to pay another visit to "his mistress" so an ideal CNI team came together.

4am and a groggy Phil arrived from Auckland to pick up Elliott in Te Awamutu. Phil opted for a power nap as Elliott drove through the early morning hours (avoiding the drunken hordes stumbling all over the road in Otorohanga, on their way home from house parties). Meanwhile Steve and Marcus were tucked up in Tahurangi Lodge having dealt with the puffer on Saturday afternoon.

To their surprise the Taranaki Tramping Club was having an end of season soiree in the lodge that evening, complete with a generous quantity of wine lugged up the ridiculous grade in the original glass bottles. Apparently it was a very festive affair that lasted well into the early hours of Sunday morning. I couldn't help but imagine what a similar party would be like at Delta. No doubt the veteran section members have some history they may or may not be able to fill me in on...

While the weather for the drive down was fine, as we climbed the mountain road moved up into the cloud and the rain. Not having expected to drive, Elliott hadn't looked too closely at the directions and managed to get Phil and himself all the way to the East Taranaki carpark before they realised it was the wrong place to be. A bit of back tracking and by 8am they were gearing up (and psyching up) in the drizzly North Taranaki carpark.

The first two hours of the climb offered no view but plenty of moisture - more than enough to test the effectiveness of our shell pants and jackets. Phil and Elliott passed a few groups of the Taranaki club members coming down the Puffer after the party. They offered some welcome beta from their climb the previous day but not much hope about the weather.

At the hut it was time to get another layer on, eat a bit and

find some motivation. The chipper (and dry) faces of Marcus and Steve gave Elliott and Phil new energy to get back out in the rain and start the real climbing.

Mainlander John Fenton tagged along with a very nice camera, taking some excellent photos of the group along the way. Marcus'

experience on the mountain definitely came in handy as we kicked steps up the North Ridge route with visibility hardly beyond 50m. Barring a short rock section the snow was still reasonably thick right from the lodge.

As we snacked on lollies and various energy bars just before traversing over the ridge, the cloud suddenly opened leaving a clear view of the summit. The combination of the sun and a target really buoyed spirits. We donned crampons and made a beeline for the top. Heart rates climbed with the heat from the sun, the steeper gradient and some deeper snow that made for deep, awkward steps. Once on top the cloud cleared offering fantastic, still views of Wanganui to the south and the towns on the coast to the north.

With a bit of time up his sleeve, Elliott had a go at the Shark's Tooth, climbing a short rock step to gain the ridge. From this viewpoint he could take a look down the East Ridge then watch the others coming up the last push to the summit.

Nice soft snow made for a fast glissade back to the lodge, Marcus demonstrating beautiful upright technique. The five parted ways here stoked to have been treated to an unforgettable afternoon with "the mistress."



Tahurangi

The weekend of 12 and 13 November held much promise. At the regular Wednesday night cragging session at Castle Rock discussion percolated over Taupo rock or Ruapehu alpine climbing. Over a few rounds of fries and pints at the Redoubt a potential overnight mission emerged as Plan A with potential for cragging at the Bay if the weather didn't play ball.

Come Saturday afternoon, Mike Greer and Gerard Tarr met at Elliott's place and the wheels were in motion. The trio drove south under cloudy skies, with eyes drawn west in hope of sign of the weather clearing. Outside the Whakapapa Village DOC visitors centre, people in down jackets shuffled into cars to avoid the showers. There was no update to the forecast so we were left with a tough decision. Push through the rain in hopes that the early forecast would pan out and the night would be clear or retreat for what would almost certainly be a good Sunday at the Bay.

Knowing that the wind forecast was relatively still, hearts were set on an alpine trip so we drove to the Top of the Bruce and started to arrange gear in the public shelter. Just as we started to cinch the packs, 5pm rolled around and the visibility extended exactly as forecast. This gave us a boost, seemingly vindicating our decision to go on with the alpine plan.

The climb to Delta hut was mainly a scramble up the rocks on the ridge, following the poles with the cloud smothering any view. The drizzle was welcome in the absence of any wind, as it prevented overheating during the climb. A bit of a snack at the hut, then the step kicking began in earnest.

On the first steep section beyond Delta, Elliott let out a cry of joy as he saw the upper edge of the cloud thinning and glimpsed the blue sky above. He left a very rough smiley face in the snow (Mike: "my daughter could draw a better one than that," Gerard "but to quote Colin McCahon: 'but she didn't") to capture the moment. The trio regrouped and kicked a quick path to the notch leading to the Summit Plateau, making for a respectable two and a half hours from the Top of the Bruce to that point. From this vantage point they watched the sun set over the clouds and the twilight deepen through the full colour spectrum.

Once at the Dome Shelter, we got straight to work digging a snow cave in the drift behind it. The late season conditions made for some big blocks of ice that required breaking up with ice tools, but eventually fashioned a space sufficient for the three of us. After a quick dinner of two minute noodles bolstered with dehy veges everyone was keen for some rest, admiring a large full moon through the opening while drifting off to sleep.

At 5am the stove was fired up again and with a beautiful morning dawning, the team hustled to get gear on for a dawn summit. We beat a straight path to the steep north facing slope leading the saddle of the West Ridge of Tahurangi. It turned out to be a tidy piece of front pointing on surprisingly firm snow. From there we made the summit in no time, taking a shortcut up a small chute. We reveled in the still conditions and stunning view of a sea of cloud to the south, the peak of Girdlestone offering the only breach.

On the return trip we decided to traverse the West Ridge along its full length. There were a few steps, but nothing that couldn't be either easily down climbed or sidled around. Stunning climbing with a view to match.

Elliott went ahead, providing Mike and Gerard with a show as he took on Paretaitonga via the south face. Nice firm snow made for excellent sustained front pointing through the second half of the climb.

After regrouping to eat lunch and pack up sleeping gear at Dome, Mike and Elliott wandered over to Cathedral Rocks to boulder up to the top of each spire. With the sun out, the Summit Plateau offered a lovely spot to watch ski tourers skin towards Tukino and sparse clouds waft through and wait for Gerard to wake up from his nap and shut up Dome. The group managed to find a nice glissading line down most of the Whakapapa skifield, only picking through the occasional rocky section below hut flat. These breaks gave us a chance to gaze over at the Pinnacle Ridge – a feature high on the priority list for a summer rock mission. Bring on summer rock on the mountain!

Happenings at Unwin

The sky is heavy, yet another westerly front is looming, snow on the ground around the Lodge, its cold, just 1 deg C outside...yarning with Nick Craddock and his clients in front of a roaring fire.

What a contrast to the opening day of the new look Unwin Lodge. The sky was blue, the sun shone and visitors were in awe of the new facilities. So, how lucky are Katrina and I to be caretakers of this fabulous asset that we all, as club members, can be proud of to call our own.

The initiation came quickly, soon after Labour weekend the Village experienced a storm which gusted 180 km/hr, Whilst a pub in the Village was just about demolished, a car in our park had a stone break a screen and one window was also smashed by a stone, and I thought the wee house we are in

was going to take off!. Following was the most fantastic thunder and lightning display. I now know to disconnect the phones in such an event...it blew up one of mine in the house, and caused a 10 hour electricity outage in the Village. Good job I had the MSR!

Labour weekend was quite busy with notable visitors Murray and Bronwyn Judge who continue to put up new routes on Sebastopol. Try Javelin (17) which has abseil bolts and a new cleared finger crack to the right (18). Also Ray and Maggie Button have been exploring the cliffs and finding new lines on rock literally behind the Lodge! And then there was a visiting Austrian guide (Cho Oyu, Kanch, Everest, etc.) and his girlfriend who just managed to summit Aoraki/Mt Cook in a weather window and who thought "these are the best mountains in the world..." They were ecstatic. It was great to see such appreciative and complimentary visitors to our mountains and the Lodge.

What's on the horizon, well of course the Climbing Camp. It's going to be full on for that week in and about the Lodge. Ray and Barbara Prince are yet again going to be on hand to assist with the hundreds of tasks necessary for a smooth time. Bookings are at time of writing very high; camping is an option when we run out of bunk spaces.

This new look Lodge is a stunner. Anyone who enjoys being in a mountain environment should make every effort to spend some time here...as a destination in itself. Personally I am looking forward to the Winter months...snow on the ground, crisp blue skies, ski under foot and a hot toddy in front of the log fire after a superb hot shower....!!

Katrina and myself look forward to seeing you all at Unwin Lodge, home to friends of the mountains.....meanwhile the snow is falling again....most unseasonal...but that's the mountains.

Cheers, Chas Tanner

Unwin Lodge, Aoraki/Mt Cook, November 2011



National Office Notices

Six month extension winner

6-month NZAC membership extension winner for November is Raymond Willett of Southland Section

Member Requests

"I am trying to locate 2 copies of a mountaineering book written by my father shortly before he passed away in 1962.

It was called "The Steepest Mountain - N Z Andes expedition 1960"

Written by Lloyd E Warburton

Neal Warburton warburton@xtra.co.nz

"Travelling to Gulmarg, Indian Kashmir next January for the winter for backcountry ski opportunities. Am going independently at the moment, if anyone is wanting ski partners or know of people going would appreciate hooking up with some people or discussing some options."

Brad bradbaston@yahoo.com

Happy Christmas from the Central North Island NZAC section.



Wishing you happy and safe adventures this summer

Committee Members Contact Details

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